

THE CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

BY A LAYMAN.

"NOCTURNA VERSATE MANU, VERSATE DIURNA."—"BE THESE YOUR STUDIES BY DAY AND BY NIGHT."

VOL. I.

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No. 25.

ESSAYS AND PARAGRAPHS,

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

REFLECTIONS FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

"CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL."

1 Cor. xiii. 5.

Perhaps there is no subject on which it is more difficult to think and act liberally than that of religion; while at the same time, it is the nature of it, to ennoble the mind and expand the heart with the most generous affections. To account for this paradox shall be the object of the present essay. As the superiority of man over other animals consists in the powers of his understanding, its conclusions on all subjects are things of a most delicate nature; and as religion is the most important of all subjects on which it can form a conclusion, to impeach its correctness here, is a wound that pride is, of all others, the most loth to forgive. Though there are but few men who employ the whole force of their intellectual powers in this important enquiry; yet there are none who are willing to be supposed superficial thinkers, where every one sees at first view they ought to think deeply; therefore, all men are liable to be wounded by having the correctness of their religious opinions called in question. It is not to be supposed, that those who live wickedly, are indifferent to religious creeds, even to correct ones when they have been taught from their infancy to believe them. Man, with his exalted powers of understanding, cannot transform himself into a brute—if he lives like one, still he cannot divest himself of his intellectual faculties; and while he possesses them they will, in some degree, even involuntarily exercise themselves on the subject of religion.

All nature proclaims so loudly the being of a God, that all men, in the exercise of their reason, believe in his existence; and they likewise believe, that he is their moral Governor and Judge, and will, in some way or other, reward or punish them for their conduct. But this is not the extent of the influence of religion over the minds of men: They always believe in the truth of the particular religion in which they are bred, be it right or wrong, till by study and investigation they establish themselves in principles supported by what they conceive the most weighty arguments, and the best evidence within their reach; or till their passions are wrought upon, their minds unhinged, and their wills placed under the guidance

of some new affection, or the controul of an unbridled imagination. One or the other of these causes is the only thing that ever occasions a change in the religious sentiments of men; and even when produced by either of these, they still most generally think, that the principles first inculcated upon their minds are next in correctness to those they have adopted. The great apostate PAINE, supposed the religion of his nursery was the best of all, except his own infidelity.

As it requires labour and magnanimity to establish ourselves in principles of faith, founded wholly upon the weight of evidence, the number of those who do so is small, in comparison with those who are guided by habit, fancy, and passion, in this important concern. As following passion and the imagination, without the exercise of the judgment, is a pleasing kind of delirium, and occasionally produces an extacy that is no other way to be attained, and as it must be supposed that religion is a good and delightful thing, there are more who are thus conscientiously led from the original track in which they were put, than from study and application. But after all, the great body of pious and devout people of all religions, nations, and ages, are such on the grounds of principles imbibed in their education: For we must know, that there is the same distinction of pious and devout, among the professors of false religions, as among those of the true. In all cases, conscience reproaches us no farther than as the rules of duty are supposed to be transgressed; and as these rules are ordinarily taken from the religion in which we are bred, the plan of our reformation extends no farther than that requires.

As for those who have received no religious impressions of a peculiar kind, as they are convinced, from the works of creation, that there is a God to whom they are accountable for their conduct, they conclude, that if they live according to the dictates of their reason, are just and beneficent to their fellow-creatures, and think and act reverently towards God, they fulfil their duty: But, if they at present counteract these reasonable dictates of their nature, they resolve at some future day, some way or other, to make compensation for their transgressions, and amend their conduct. The case is the same with those who are trained up in any particular system of religion: If they live regardless of its requirements, they still resolve, in due time, to correct their ways, and at length to place themselves under the safety of its banners.

By this view of the ordinary operations of the human mind on the subject of religion, we see that it is absurd to suppose, that all

those who live wickedly under the light of the Gospel, are infidels and atheists. This is so far from being the case, that but very few of those who pretend it, are such. Some, from the importunity of their propensities and passions, occasionally forget their good principles and act very inconsistently with them; but many more resolve, at some future day, to reform their lives; and as a profession of infidelity gives them more consistency of character, this is assumed, under the idea, that it may easily be included in a general repentance.

Thus we see the reason why, those of every description are so apt to think evil of him who calls in question the truth or propriety of any part of the religion they profess; or of that in which they have been bred. The most conscientious may suppose it an impeachment of their integrity; and all are ready to resist it as a procedure derogatory to their judgment; and many consider it, not only a reproach upon themselves, but upon their dearest friends, who are in heaven. By this we see the danger of thinking evil, where no evil is intended.

I have been led into this train of thought, and this delineation of the human character, from the circumstance of having lately officiated in the capacity of a religious teacher, before a congregation, whose education had been, in some degree, different from what I conceived to be correct, and different from the doctrine I at that time inculcated. Under these circumstances, I was aware of the danger of giving offence; and though I used arguments alone upon this occasion, still I feared that evil might be thought—that unworthy motives might be ascribed to me.

Much, however, to the honour of the Christian religion, in whatever form it may be professed, I found that the most conscientious adherents to the principles opposed, were much the most indulgent, on this occasion: They seemed to consider it only as an unhappy difference of opinion with respect to the means of attaining the end, that they and I had equally in view; namely, purity of heart, and a participation of the Divine nature.

This candid and generous temper of mind, led me to reflect upon the harmony that would be produced among all who go by the Christian name, were they to make it their principal endeavour to imbibe the spirit of their religion, in whatever form they profess it, and to exercise it upon all occasions of the like nature.—Under the influence of this amiable spirit, we should be led to think so well of each other, that the errors of the head would cause no alienation of affection; and all errors would be thought such, which did not derogate from the character of God, or lead to unholiness of life. This would be an effectual cure of all sectarian pride, bigotry, and intolerance. The really correct in faith would most heartily pity the erroneous; and the erroneous would listen with all the eagerness inspired by the love of truth, to every argument advanced for its support; and if from infirmity, unable to receive it, they would still feel happy in the friendship of their supposedly erroneous brethren, and still happier in the expansion of their own benevolent affections towards them. Thus

the vile and the weak, the knowing and the ignorant, the partially erroneous and the correct, would walk on hand in hand to the place where intellectual weakness shall cease and error be no more—where there will be no strife but in the exercise of the purest and most exalted affections.

Let us, then, endeavour to prepare our minds for the holy day that is approaching, by banishing from them, pride, narrowness of thought, undue regard to sectarian habitude, and all unholy affections. Then we shall read, and hear the sacred scriptures with no other design, but to be instructed and animated in our duty; we shall then weigh the arguments of the preacher in the only balance in which they ought to be tried—we shall test them by the only infallible standard—THE WORD OF GOD.

If any previous notion is contradicted, we shall fairly place the arguments by which we took it up in the scales with those with which it is now opposed, remembering that they have gained nothing by lying so long undisturbed in the mind. If after this trial, the former are found to outweigh the latter (of which we must be extremely careful, that we are not mistaken) we shall then renew our draught in the good spirit of our religion; warm our hearts with generous and benevolent affections; consider how unhappy we should be, were the error in ourselves, instead of the preacher; pity our wandering guide; ascribe his mistakes to the infirmity of his nature; and approach his head with so tender and delicate a hand, that if we are unable to adjust it, a still happier result will ensue;—a reciprocal exercise of the kindest and best affections of our nature.

But above all things, let us never suppose, that theoretical errors in religion proceed from any peculiar depravity of the heart, unless they are attended with baseness of conduct: And let us likewise remember, that the best evidence we can give, either to ourselves or others, that we are Christians indeed, is by the triumph of love over the pride of opinion, the selfishness of sect, and the abuse of our enemies. CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL. With this divine principle in our hearts, we may be greatly profited by the holy exercises of the morrow; and by letting it abide with us we shall at length be carried by it beyond the reach of sin and error—it will survive our faith and hope, and render us for ever happy in the kingdom of God.

D. C.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

The communication of D. C. was enclosed in an envelope, of the date of Oct. 15th. But it did not reach the Editor till Tuesday morning last, having been inadvertently mislaid in the Printing-Office. This, we presume, will form an ample apology to the writer for the delay of its appearance.

To the Editor of the CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

SIR,—I take the liberty to enclose the Report of a Trial, had in this State, for BLASPHEMY. I am aware that the subject matter of the indictment is almost too gross for publication, and that it may prove offensive to the sincere Christian; but it will, at the same time, be a consolation to reflect, that under an independent and able judiciary, a crime so heinous as *blasphemy* and *profane swearing* is not to be

indulged with impunity: That the wretch who imprecates the wrath of God upon himself, or his fellow-being, may not find himself disappointed by a partial infliction of that wrath in this world. The attention of the reader is especially directed to the opinion of the Court, as expressed by Chief Justice (now Chancellor) KENT. It establishes the interesting fact, *That Christianity is a constituent principle of our polity*: and that offences against the Christian Religion, are offences, of course, against the Government.

The crime of blasphemy and profane swearing, is an insult to the Majesty of Heaven, and degrades and debases human nature. It goes farther to shew, that our Christianity is merely nominal, and our ethics founded upon wrong principles, than any other vice that infests community. With but few, if any, exceptions, it is the concomitant of every species of depravity. It is a distinctive mark of the infidel: For the man who is in the habitual practice of enunciating the name of God, and his Son, and of deriding, and sneering at, his Attributes and Revelations, can have but a faint belief in His existence—His holiness—and His perfections. *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord, thy God, in vain*, is a precept of that rule of conduct which the Great Author of all being has prescribed for the guidance of his rational creatures; and woe to him that dares *impiously and impudently* to violate it.

It is a matter of serious moment to witness the extent and progress of the crime in question. In all the walks of life, from budding youth to withering age, it is found to exist in a greater or less degree: And, in my appreciation, there is not, in the black catalogue of crimes and vices, one that threatens so much mischief to Society. With the wise and the good, it has always been a primary object to rear the youthful mind to a reverence of God, and a love of virtue. Upon the good or ill impressed on the mind of the rising generation depend the destinies of a land. In a Republic, then, how important, how ALL IMPORTANT, that its hopes and stays, the future dispensers of our fathers' rich legacy, should be duly qualified for their high trust. It affects me, while reverting the mental eye to the history and fate of the ancient Republics, to anticipate the like for my native country. But, reasoning upon undisputed principles, the event is indubitable; unless we turn our course, and lay our path on higher ground. There must take place a radical change in our manners, and a substitution of rigid virtues for our multiplied vices. I have the perpetuity and soundness of the republican fabric at heart; and, feeling deeply interested in my subject, I would call the attention of the fathers of our land to a serious consideration of the nature and effects of blasphemy and profane swearing. Shall we, who live in the meridian splendor of Revelation and Truth, fall short of the ancients in the first duty of man? In the schools of the Heathen philosophers, a reverence for the gods was a first principle infused into the minds of their disciples; and those acquainted with their systems, can attest, as to the efficacy of this principle, even under the fabled superstructure of a lurid mythology.

I cannot close these remarks without urging it upon the members of the Societies for the Suppression of Vice and Immorality, to redouble their efforts to annihilate this detestable crime and vice. The Law, and the Courts—the well disposed, and the virtuous of all classes, will stretch out their hands to aid them.

R.

The Supreme Court, &c. of New-York.

THE PEOPLE AGAINST RUGGLES.

"The defendant was indicted at the general sessions of the peace, held at Kingsbury, in the county of Washington, in Dec. 1810, for that he did, on the 2nd day of September, 1810, at Salem, &c. *wickedly, maliciously and blasphemously*, utter, and with a loud voice publish, in the presence and hearing of divers good and christian people, &c. of and concerning the christian religion, and of and concerning JESUS CHRIST, the false, scandalous, malicious, wicked and blasphemous words following, to wit: "*Jesus Christ* was a bastard, and his mother must be a whore," in contempt of the christian religion, and the laws of this state, to the evil and pernicious example of all others, &c. The indictment was removed into the court of oyer and terminer and jail delivery, held on the 11th June, 1811, in Washington county, before Mr. Justice Spencer, and the judges of the common pleas, when the defendant was tried and found guilty, and was sentenced by the court to be imprisoned for three months, and to pay a fine of 500 dollars.

The record of the proceedings and conviction, &c. having been removed to this court—

Wendell, for the prisoner, now contended, that the offence charged in the indictment was not punishable by the law of this state, though, he admitted, it was punishable by the common law of England, where christianity makes part of the law of the land, on account of its connexion with the established church. In England, apostacy, heresy, reviling the ordinances of the established church, and non-conformity, are made punishable by statute. But from the preamble, and the provisions of the constitution of this state, and the silence of the legislature, it was to be inferred, that christianity did not make a part of the common law of this state. There are no statutes concerning religion, except those relative to the Sabbath, and to suppress immorality. The constitution allows a free toleration to all religions, and to all kinds of worship. The exception as to *licentiousness*, refers to conduct, not opinions. Judaism and Mahometanism may be preached here, without any legal animadversion. For aught that appears, the prisoner may have been a Jew, a Mahometan, or a Socinian, and if so, he had a right, by the constitution, to declare his opinions.

The offence charged in the indictment, attacks only the divinity of Christ. It is not an offence against religion in general; nor does it affect moral evidence, or destroy confidence in human testimony.

Gold, contra, observed, that the common law of England, as it stood in 1776, was adopted by the constitution, and made part of the law of the state. That blasphemy, or the contumelious reproaches of our Saviour, were punishable by the common law of England, was not on account of there being an established church, but it was a principle coeval with the English law, and had stood unshaken amidst all the revolutions and changes in church and state.

Blasphemy is defined, by Blackstone, to be the denying the being or providence of God; contumelious reproaches of Christ; profane scoffing at the holy scripture, or exposing it to contempt and ridicule. In the case of *The King vs. Woolston*, the court of King's Bench declared, that they would not suffer it to be debated, whether to write against christianity in general, was not an offence punishable in the temporal courts, at common law. While the constitution of this state has saved the rights of conscience, and allowed a free and fair discussion of all points of controversy among religious sects, it has left the principle engrafted on the body of our common law, that christianity is part of the laws of the state, untouched and unimpaired.

KENT, Chief Justice, delivered the opinion of the court. The offence charged is, that the defendant below did, "*wickedly, maliciously, and blasphemously* utter, in the presence and hearing of divers good and christian people, these false, feigned, scandalous, malicious, wicked and blasphemous words, to wit: "*Jesus Christ* was a bastard, and his mother must be a whore;" and the single question is, whether this be a public offence by the law of the land. After conviction, we must intend that these words were uttered in a wanton man-

ner, and, as they evidently import, with a wicked and malicious disposition, and not in a serious discussion upon any controverted point in religion. The language was blasphemous not only in a popular, but in a legal sense; for blasphemy, according to the most precise definitions, consists in maliciously reviling God or religion, and this was reviling christianity through its Author. (*Emlyn's Preface to the State Trials*, p. 8. See also *Whitlock's Speech, State Trials*, vol. 2. 273.) The Jury have passed upon the intent, or *quo animo*, and if those words spoken, in any case, will amount to a misdemeanour, the indictment is good.

Such words, uttered with such a disposition, were an offence of common law. In *Taylor's case*, (1 Vent. 293. 3 Keb. 607. *Tremaine's Pleas of the Crown*, 226. S. C.) the defendant was convicted upon information of speaking similar words, and the court of K. B. said, that christianity was parcel of the law, and to cast contumelious reproaches upon it, tended to weaken the foundation of moral obligation and the efficacy of oaths. And in the case of *Rex v. Woolston* (*Str.* 334. *Fitzg.* 64.) on a like conviction, the court said they would not suffer it to be debated, whether defaming christianity in general was not an offence at common law, for that whatever strikes at the root of christianity, tends manifestly to the dissolution of civil government. But the court were careful to say, that they did not intend to include disputes between learned men upon particular controverted points. The same doctrine was laid down in the late case of *The King v. Williams*, for the publication of Paine's "*Age of Reason*," which was tried before Lord Kenyon, in July, 1797. The authorities shew, that blasphemy against God, and contumelious reproaches and profane ridicule of Christ or the holy scriptures (which are equally treated as blasphemy) are offences punishable at common law, whether uttered by words or writings. (*Taylor's case*, 1 Vent. 293. 4 Blacks. Com. 59. 1 Hank. b. 1. c. 5. 1 East's P. C. 3. *Tremaine's Entries* 225. *Rex v. Doyley*.) The consequences may be less extensively pernicious in the one case than in the other, but in both instances the reviling is still an offence, because it tends to corrupt the morals of the people and to destroy good order. Such offences have always been considered independent of any religious establishment or the rights of the church. They are treated as affecting the essential interests of civil society.

And why should not the language contained in the indictment be still an offence with us? There is nothing in our manners or institutions which has prevented the application or the necessity of this part of the common law. We stand equally in need, now as formerly, of all that moral discipline, and of those principles of virtue, which help to bind society together. The people of this state, in common with the people of this country, profess the general doctrines of christianity, as the rule of their faith and practice; and to scandalize the author of these doctrines is, not only, in a religious point of view, extremely impious, but even in respect to the obligations due to society, is a gross violation of decency and good order. Nothing could be more offensive to the virtuous part of community or more injurious to the tender morals of the young, than to declare such profanity lawful. It would go to confound all distinction between things sacred and profane; for to use the words of one of the greatest oracles of human wisdom, "profane scoffing doth by little and little deface the reverence for religion;" and who adds in another place, "two principal causes have I ever known of atheism—curious controversies and profane scoffing." (*Lord Bacon's Works*, vol. 2. 291. 503.) Things which corrupt moral sentiment, as obscene actions, prints and writings, and even gross instances of seduction, have, upon the same principle, been held indictable; and shall we form an exception in these particulars to the rest of the civilized world? No government among any of the polished nations of antiquity, and none of the institutions of modern Europe (a single and monitory case excepted) ever hazarded such a bold experiment upon the solidity of the public morals, as to permit with impunity, and under the sanction of their tribunals, the general religion of the community to be openly insulted and defamed. The very idea of jurisprudence with the ancient lawgivers and philosophers, embraced the religion of the country.—*Jurisprudentia est divinarum atque humanarum rerum notitia* (*Dig.* b. 1. 10. 2. *Cic. De Legibus*, b. 2. *passim*.)

The free, equal, and undisturbed enjoyment of religious opinions, whatever it may be, and free and decent discussions on any religious subject, is granted and secured; but to revile, with malicious and blasphemous contempt, the religion professed by almost the whole community, is an abuse of that right. Nor are we bound, by any expressions in the constitution, as some have strangely supposed, either not to punish at all, or to punish indiscriminately, the like attacks upon the religion of Mahomet or of the grand Lama; and for this plain reason, that the case assumes that we are a christian people, and the morality of the country is deeply ingrafted upon christianity, and not upon the doctrines or worship of those impostors. Besides, the offence is *crimen malitiæ*, and the imputation of malice could not be inferred from any invectives upon superstitions equally false and unknown. We are not to be restrained from animadversion upon offences against public decency, like those committed by Sir Charles Sedley (1 Sid. 168.) or by one Rolfe (*Sayer*, 158.) merely because there may be savage tribes, and perhaps semi-barbarous nations, whose sense of shame would not be affected by what we should consider the most audacious outrages upon decorum. It is sufficient that the common law checks upon words and actions, dangerous to the public welfare, apply to our case, and are suited to the condition of this and every other people whose manners are refined, and whose morals have been elevated and inspired with a more enlarged benevolence, by means of the christian religion.

Though the constitution has discarded religious establishments, it does not forbid judicial cognizance of those offences against religion and morality which have no reference to any such establishment, or to any particular form of government, but are punishable, because they strike at the root of moral obligation, and weaken the security of the social ties. The object of the 38th article of the constitution, was, to "guard against spiritual oppression and intolerance," by declaring that "the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, should for ever thereafter be allowed within this state, to all mankind." This declaration (noble and magnanimous as it is, when duly understood) never meant to withdraw religion in general, and with it the best sanctions of moral and social obligation, from all consideration and notice of the law. It will be fully satisfied by a free and universal toleration, without any of the tests, disabilities, or discriminations, incident to a religious establishment. To construe it as breaking down the common law barriers against licentiousness, wanton, and impious attacks upon christianity itself, would be an enormous perversion of its meaning. The proviso guards the article from such dangerous latitude of construction, when it declares, that "the liberty of conscience hereby granted, shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of this state." The preamble and this proviso are a species of commentary upon the meaning of the article, and they sufficiently shew, that the framers of the constitution intended only to banish tests, oaths, disabilities, and the burdens, and sometimes the oppression of church establishments; and to secure to the people of this state freedom from coercion, and an equality of right, on the subject of religion. This was no doubt the consummation of their wishes. It was all that reasonable minds could require, and it had long been a favourite object on both sides of the Atlantic, with some of the most enlightened friends to the rights of mankind, whose indignation had been roused by infringements of the liberty of conscience, and whose zeal was inflamed in the pursuit of its enjoyment. That this was the meaning of the constitution is further confirmed by a paragraph in a preceding article, which specially provides, that "such parts of the common law as might be construed to establish or maintain any particular denomination of christians, or their ministers, were thereby abrogated."

The legislative exposition of the constitution is conformable to the view of it. Christianity, in its enlarged sense, as religion is revealed and taught in the Bible, is not unknown to our law. The statute for preventing immorality (*Laws*, vol. 1. 224.) consecrates the first day of the week, as holy time, and considers the violation of it as immoral. This was only the continuation, in substance, of the law of the colony, which declared, that the profanation of the Lord

day was "the great scandal of the christian faith." The act concerning oaths, (*Laws*, vol. 1 p. 405.) recognizes the common law mode of administering an oath, "by laying the hand on and kissing the gospels." Surely, then, we are bound to conclude, that wicked and malicious words, writings, and actions, which go to vilify those gospels, continue, as at common law, to be an offence against the public peace and safety. They are inconsistent with the reverence due to the administration of an oath, and among their other evil consequences, they tend to lessen, in the public mind, its religious sanction.

The court are accordingly of opinion, that the judgment below must be affirmed.

[JUDGMENT AFFIRMED.]

DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

THE SECOND REPORT

OF THE SOCIETY FOR SUPPORTING THE GOSPEL AMONG THE POOR,
IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

[CONCLUDED.]

APPENDIX.

CITY HOSPITAL.

R—IB—s, aged 19. This young woman has kept her bed several months, by consumption. From my first visit to her, she listened with attention to my advice, and was desirous to know the Lord. She, however, shortly after confessed, that she had been so great a sinner, and that she felt her heart so very hard and obstinate, she was almost ready to despair of mercy. Gradually, it pleased the Lord to open to her the riches of mercy in Christ the Redeemer. Having promises of mercy recommended to her attention, she speedily found in prayer access to the throne of grace. On one of my visits, I asked her of the state of her mind? She said, "I pray to the Lord night and day, when my pains any way abate. It is my only comfort and delight; for, I have some hope that God will save me at last through Jesus Christ, for I forsake all hope in myself."—After returning from my usual visits to the institutions in Greenwich, though late at night, I called to see this young woman. She was at that instant seized with an unusual fit of coughing, and appeared near strangling. I immediately retired, and sent the physician to her relief. God blessed the means, and I returned to her ward. Rachel, said I, how happy for you to say, Father, not my will but thine be done! "Sir," she replied, "I can say more than that." What is it? "Sir, I can feel it! I wait for my Lord to come and take me, for I long to be with him."—After prayer, the young woman, in the name of her Saviour, in the presence of several around her, thanked me for my visits, and which was done in so affecting a manner, that I was obliged to retire. Owing to a severe fall, which confined me to my house, I was prevented from seeing Rachel again; but, on my request, Dr. McLeod made her a visit. He afterwards informed me, that he obtained from her very pleasing satisfaction. On the next Saturday night, this young woman died happily in the arms of Jesus. Knowing that the time of her departure had arrived, she embraced her surrounding friends, and bid them farewell. Perceiving her sister to weep, she requested her to forbear, or she should be obliged to shut her eyes. Presently after, without a struggle, she gently breathed her last, and her spirit returned to the bosom of her God!—February 5, 1815.

CITY HOSPITAL.

Jno. C.—

November 13.—On request of H. W. the superintendent, visited this man after my return from S. P. Chapel. I found him in the last stage of consumption, and very sensible of his state as a sinner, needing an interest in Christ Jesus. I gave him encouragement from the promises of the Gospel, and opened to him the office of the Spirit to apply them to his own comfort. He thankfully accepted my proposal to pray with him; and after prayer, the sensibility of his heart was such, that every part of his body was agitated.

Wednesday, 19.—On entering this man's ward, his countenance wore a smile, and welcomed me to the side of his bed. He assured me that he had not altogether been unmindful of the salvation of his soul, but that he felt very different to what he did before, and was looking to the Lord for his promise of pardon. "I am sinking very fast, I cannot be long in this life; I wish to be prepared for that which is to come. This is all my desire, and all my prayer."

Monday Morning, 21.—Made a visit to this dying man, and found him very tranquil. His mind was directed to the Lord for the experience of his mercy; and for which he was engaged in earnest prayer.

Wednesday, 23.—C. appeared much lower. On this visit I obtained more satisfaction from him. "I know I must perish without Christ. One sin must condemn me; how much more my many sins. A whole world cannot save me from one sin. I am nothing but sin, and none but Christ can save me; and to him I look for mercy." My address to him was intended to be instructive and consoling. After prayer, he said, "Sir, when you visit me I have those sensations which I cannot account for; at any rate they lead me more to the Lord, who I hope will give me more tastes of his mercy." Was informed by several of the patients, that this man was so reconciled to die, that he this morning had sent to one of his friends to furnish him with some grave's clothes. Indeed, there is yet remaining in his emaciated countenance, such strong marks of pious and cheerful resignation, as evince the kind hand of God upon him.

Lord's Day Noon, 27.—Visited C. for the last time. He was speechless, yet perfectly sensible. I asked him if he enjoyed a sense of the Divine presence? to which he bowed his head. I then inquired of him, if he was resigned to the hand of the Lord? he raised up his hand.—Monday morning at five, he composedly breathed his last.

STATE PRISON.

Wm. L.—s.—This is a very old black man. From his speech, I supposed he was a native of Guinea. He has been confined to his bed, in the hospital of this prison for a great length of time. I have frequently, and with great pleasure, conversed with him: his answers were short, pertinent and impressive. He is very deaf. I wish I had more early taken notes of his conversation. To-day, I asked him of his state of mind. In his dialect, he answered, "Massa Parson, my pain be very great, my poor body. My heart look to the Lord Jesus; he only my support. Massa, I no one else to look; he make me patient. Bless yor, Massa."

February 10.—William, how do you do? "Very comfortable tank God, and you too, Massa." William, what makes you so comfortable? "Jese Christ be my friend and Saviour too, Massa. God be very good to me, poor creature. I don't want to live; I want to go to heaven, if I could get dare, Massa." Don't you know that Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and that none come unto the Father but by him? "O yes, please you, Massa, I know dat, and his way good enough for me, poor creature! I shall be dare bye and bye. Den I have no more pain, no more sin, dat be best of all, Massa Parson. I shall praise all de time, never leaf off."

March 10.—To satisfy myself, I asked this man where he was born? He said, he was born at Brooklyn, on Long-Island. He was removed into another room for the benefit of a watcher, as he apparently was growing much worse. On the state of his mind, he said, "Sir, I depen upon my good God for every ting; he support, and he comfort me, Massa, very well; tank you, Massa!"

17th. All this poor old man said to me to-day, was, "I very weak; I try all-I can; put my trus in God; I want no oder; help me every day; my life most gone; tank you dearly, Massa Parson; God bless you, Massa."

21st. He was very low, and I was informed, that he had taken no nourishment for two days. All he said to me, "Sir, when my eyes open, I look to the Almighty; he my hope, hope—he no forsake me, Massa, I hang on, all day long, till night come. And when I wake in night, the Lord be very good."

24th. He was evidently sinking into mortality, yet desirably composed. He asked me, "How do you do, Sir?" I answered, that I

was the better for being able to see him once more. "O yes, Massa, I know dat. We tank you heartily, Massa, to tink onus; and if the Lord tink too, it will be well, Massa. Massa, I smell apple!" I assured him that I had not one about me; but, if he wished one, it should be procured. He said, "Tank you, sir, very good; bit apple revive me." An apple was directly ordered; perhaps the last morsel the poor old man will eat.

26th. In the night he died. On inquiry of one of the prisoners in the same room, I was informed that all this poor old man said was, "Now I die—happy for me die."

CONSECRATION.

On Tuesday, the 24th ult. the Rt. Rev. Bishop HOBART, assisted by several of his clergy, consecrated the new Episcopal Church, in Rensselaerville, Albany county, to the service of Almighty God, by the name of "Trinity Church." Morning service was performed by the Rev. Mr. Prentice, and an appropriate sermon preached by the Bishop, from Hab. ii. chap. and a part of the 20th v. "The Lord is in his holy temple." The congregation was crowded and attentive.

The following day, after morning prayers were read by the Rev. Mr. Thompson, and a Sermon preached by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Hobart, on the ordinance of confirmation, about twenty persons received that holy rite; immediately after which, CHARLES W. HAMILTON, of Athens, was presented by the Rev. Mr. Fuller, and admitted by the Bishop, to the holy order of Deacon.

The seriousness and devotion, manifested by the crowded assemblies which attended the solemn services of both these days, were highly gratifying to every friend of the religion of Jesus Christ.

[Catskill Recorder.]

INTELLIGENCE FROM ABROAD.

ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

On Wednesday, the 3d of May, 1815, was held at FREE-MASONS' HALL, the Eleventh Anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. At twelve o'clock, Lord Teignmouth, the President, supported by the Bishops of Norwich and St. David's, the lords Gambier, Headley, Calthorpe, &c. the Deans of Wells, Connor, &c. Sir Thos. Dyke Ackland, M. P. Thomas Babington, Esq. M. P. J. D. Porcher, Esq. M. P. together with a numerous assemblage of Gentry, Clergy, &c. among whom were the Ministers of the Russian, German, Dutch, and Danish Churches, in London—took the Chair; and with the occasional assistance of the Rev. W. Dealtry, read the Report in the audience of a Meeting, in which the Representatives, both Lay and Clerical, of almost all the Auxiliary Societies, appeared to be convened. From the mass of facts which the Report detailed, his Lordship the President was under the necessity of omitting a considerable proportion. But the whole, together with a voluminous Appendix, is in the press, and will speedily be ready for delivery.

The following is the Statement of Issues of Bibles and Testaments, and of the Funds, as represented in the Report:—

The Issue of Copies of the Scriptures, from March 31, 1814, to March 31, 1815, had been—

126,156 BIBLES. | 123,776 TESTAMENTS.

Making a Total, issued from the commencement of the Institution to that period, of—

516,479 BIBLES. | 718,788 TESTAMENTS.

In all, 1,235,257 copies; exclusive of about 64,025, circulated at the charge of the Society from Depositories abroad; making a total of One Million, Two Hundred and Ninety-nine Thousand, Two Hundred and Eighty-two Copies, already circulated by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The Receipts of the Year have been—

	l.	s.	d.	l.	s.	d.
Annual Subscriptions, - - -	3272	10	6			
Donations and Life, ditto, - -	2429	9	11			
Congregational Collections, - -	1406	7	8			
				7108	8	1
Legacies, - - - - -				1312	18	0
Dividends, &c. - - - - -				1703	10	0
Contributions from Auxiliary Societies, -				61848	11	9
Sales of Bibles and Testaments, the greater part of which were purchased by Bible Associations, - - - - -	27560	6	5			
Sale of Reports, &c. - - - - -	361	1	3			
				27921	7	8
Total, - - - - -				99894	15	6

The Expenditure of the Year, - - - 81012 12 5
Obligations of the Society, including Orders given for Bibles and Testaments, about 40000 0 0

After the Report had been read (during the course of which his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent entered the room) his Lordship apologized for the unavoidable absence of the Bishops of Salisbury and Cloyne, occasioned, that of the former, by urgent affairs; of the latter, by an illness which confined him to his room. The business then proceeded in the usual order.

The Hon. and Very Rev. Dean of WELLS (now Bishop Elect of Gloucester) moved that the Report be adopted and printed; and spoke in substance as follows:—

"My Lord, &c.

"The unexpected absence of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, is a subject of great regret to us all; but to me more especially, as it has devolved a Motion so important upon one so little qualified in any respect to do it justice. I have to move the adoption of and printing the Report: a Report, which details the progress of the Bible in the course of the year, through the means of the British and Foreign Bible Society: a Report which communicates the triumphs of the Word of God; of that word, which is the vehicle of Divine truth, which is the herald and the instrument of everlasting salvation. A subject so mighty in extent and importance, seems to overwhelm a mind of very common capacity, and to close lips of very little readiness and fluency; but happily for the Mover and for you, the extraordinary fullness and ability of the Report, anticipate, as it were, the deficiencies of the speaker, and allow him to confine himself to a few brief sketches, and a general outline. The late successes, and the future prospects of the Society, are the two subjects which naturally present themselves to the mind, as the main results of what we have heard to day.

"Among the European harvests of the year, Holland and Russia stand prominent. The Netherlands have scarcely enjoyed their independence a year, and yet in that short interval, a National Bible Society has been formed, containing thirty-two Branches, and occupying all the chief cities of that populous country. We gave the signal, and may be permitted to rejoice in our singular success on this occasion. The first division of our troops which was sent to aid that people in their efforts for the recovery of her freedom, were in a manner accompanied by the heralds of the Bible Society; and we are thus enabled to repay, but with a far superior boon, the benefits which we had received from that country. She sent us, above a century ago, our liberator from temporal and even religious slavery, King William; we have now, in return, sent her the grand deliverer from spiritual bondage, the blessed Word of God; before which, under the influence of the Spirit, every tyrant of the soul will fall, and the glorious liberty of the sons of God be established.

"Russia is the next object of grateful contemplation. She entered her course a year before; and her increase of contribution, zeal, and exertion, exceed in the past year, our liveliest expectations. Her triple progress in two years is truly astonishing.

"The first step of the Bible Society was to print and distribute the Word of God for the professors of what may be called the foreign religions; namely, the four millions of inhabitants, whose mode of worship and discipline differs from the ritual of the Greek Church. The second step soon followed: the full acquiescence of the Synod in distributing the Bible in their native tongue amongst those who adhere to the National Establishment. And the third has now crowned the work: the cordial union of all Christians throughout that vast empire, in preparing the Scriptures for their innumerable subjects and neighbours in Asia.

"In the Armenian version, which the Russian Society is about to publish, they are even already throwing out a link which will, ere long, unite them in the grand cause with their confederate and competitor, the Bible Society in Bengal. From thence, another Armenian version is about to proceed, and the fellow-workers in the cause of God, from Petersburg to Calcutta, will, ere long, we trust, join hands in a middle point: thus experiencing the truth of the assertion, that no distance of place, no tract of mountains, wilds and seas, no once apprehended opposition of interests, can keep those asunder whom the Bible draws together. To the second quarter of the globe, we are thence led to turn our eyes—and there we behold India, by this time, blessed with translations of the Bible into a large proportion of her different and diversified languages. The appetite for the food seems to increase with the diligence and success in providing it. It is impossible to supply Bibles with sufficient rapidity to keep pace with the demand among the natives.

"The Star in the East seems to be rising with unexampled splendor, and promise of a glorious day; just as he, who was one of the first to bend our eyes and our charity in that direction, is removed from our sight. The mortal part of Buchanan is committed to the earth; but his immortal soul ascends to heaven, where we humbly trust, through the Saviour, whom he loved, that, amidst multitudes of Indian converts, whom he will have been, through his publications, instrumental in turning to righteousness, he will shine as the stars for ever and ever.

"To the third quarter, America, our view is next directed: and, thanks be to the God of Peace! now, without any distortion of jealousy; any check of prejudice, and enmity. Individuals, through our Society, had been long at peace, while the national warfare continued; but now the blessed influence has extended from the members, and the body, to the head; and we have no further contention, than to provoke one another unto love and good works—no further rivalry, than the godly emulation of dispersing the Bible and its fruits through our respective Hemispheres. The Bible, during the war, first joined the right hands of fellowship across the Atlantic; and the whole nations have at length hailed and acknowledged the omen, and sealed the bond.

"Nearly 70 Bible Societies are now in action in that country; and they own in ours, their parent, not only in blood, but in example and labour of love.

"It is surely not a little remarkable, that, almost at the very moment when the peace (as we trusted, of unexampled solidity) was suddenly rent asunder by the return of the foe to that country, where the Bible Society has as yet made no sensible progress; it should have been ratified (and we will hope with bright prospects of permanence) with our transatlantic brethren, who have been long our imitators and rivals in this glorious work of diffusing spiritual peace.

"Such are a few of the prominent features in the late successes of our Society. I conclude with her future prospects.

"The analogy of all that is past, would encourage us, in reliance upon the nature of our cause, and the goodness of its Almighty Author, to be most sanguine for the future. The dawn has been exceedingly fair; and has seemed, from year to year, to advance with uninterrupted lustre towards the mid-day. But on a sudden a meteor seems to have shot athwart the sky, and a cloud to have arisen in the political horizon, which portends the revival of all that is hostile to peace, to liberty, to morals, and to religion. Every hope of temporal blessing has been checked, and given way to doubt and fear, on the

return of the tyrant to the former seat of his power. But, my lord, it is not so with *our* hope. Our Society sprang up in the midst of war, distress, and alarm. It has flourished in spite of every event so prejudicial to all other designs for the good of society. War has paved the way for the Bible, by making the nations sensible of the utter insufficiency and vanity of all other possessions; and by thus convincing them of their want of consolation and instruction from heaven.

"War has also contributed, in an extraordinary manner, to the dissemination of the Bible, by remarkably extending the commercial intercourse and influence of that nation, to whom this office seems to have been first and chiefly committed.—War has cradled the infancy and cherished the adolescence of our Society, and cannot, therefore, be reasonably expected to impede its growth towards manhood and maturity. Surely then, my lords and gentlemen, we may be permitted still to indulge our hopes, and to labour in our cause; not only of constraint, but willingly and cheerfully; trusting, that He, in whose hands are all events, whatever issue he may destine to the approaching contest, will cause his Word to go on conquering and to conquer; and praying, that our enemies, even those who seem now to be severely chastised for their persevering disregard of Divine Revelation, may at length, in due time, receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save their souls; and be added to the number of those nations, who, when the judgments of God are abroad in the world, learn righteousness, and accept salvation."

Edward Stackhouse, Esq. one of the Vice-Presidents of the Cornwall Auxiliary Society, having in a few expressive words, seconded the motion of the Dean of Wells, the Report was unanimously adopted.

The Rev. Mr. Kierluf, minister of the Danish church in London, being now introduced, addressed the meeting to the following effect:—

"My Lord and Gentlemen—

"With a view to second the resolution of the able speaker, who just sat down, I cannot avoid saying a few words with regard to the sentiments so generally entertained in that country where I was born, of the utility and extensive benefit of the British and Foreign Bible Society. A native of Denmark, I myself can judge, my lord, of the zeal shown in that country in forwarding the pious views of this excellent institution. True to the maxim contained in the words of that most worthy and beloved sovereign, who said—"I wish that every poor child in my kingdom may be taught to read the Bible;" true to this maxim of the royal father of the British nation, has the paternal government of Denmark acted during many years. The greatest exertions have been made in promoting the instruction of all ranks of people; even under more recent and national calamities, this object was never lost sight of. I can take upon myself to say, my lord, and I state it with great satisfaction, that your lordship will hardly find a man or a woman who is not able to read the gospel of light—who is not qualified to draw the water of life from its pure source.

"But one institution was still wanting, I need not say which! But with grateful sentiments I have to acknowledge, that, by the assistance, and in imitation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a Bible Society is also established at Copenhagen; to which Society, though in its infancy, all the pious inhabitants of Denmark look up with joyful expectation. This tree will soon spread its branches over the whole country; all smaller towns, nay all villages, will hasten to follow and imitate the example set them by the metropolis, in establishing Auxiliary Societies. Your great object, my lord, will be rapidly promoted; each father of a family, nay, each adult, son, and daughter of the family, will have their copy of the Holy Scriptures; for the reading and understanding of which the way is amply prepared. Denmark owes to her enlightened government, that even the poor are prepared for receiving the word of God: But that a provision has been made for richly supplying the poor with that book, which contains the Revelation of God; for this blessing, Denmark will for ever be indebted to the British and Foreign Bible Society."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

OBITUARY.

COMMUNICATED FOR THE VISITANT.

DIED at Amsterdam, on the 22d ult. and in the 31st year of his age, the Rev. EBENEZER SILLIMAN, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in that place

Mr. S. was endued with a quick apprehension and a discerning mind. He was resolute in his purposes, industrious and persevering in his habits, and ardent in his piety. His natural talents, his habits of life, and above all, his piety, qualified him for eminent usefulness.

Early in his youth he became hopefully a subject of God's renewing grace, and devoted himself to the Lord. And when his character was known to the friends of religion around him, he was persuaded by their counsel and encouragement to devote himself to the work of the gospel ministry. The greatest difficulties, in point of pecuniary support, obstructed the attempt. He was desirous of entering the ministry, but could not think of assuming that office without the qualifications of a liberal education: And to acquire such an education from its very rudiments, without money and without friends, who were able to defray the expense for him, seemed to him almost impossible. He saw the great and serious difficulties before him; but was not discouraged, for he knew in whom he trusted. Nor was his confidence disappointed. God in his kind providence presented successive opportunities for him to receive instruction, which he improved faithfully. Friends also, and assistance where they were little expected, were sent to help him in his education.—In little more than three years from the time that he had matured his purpose to pass through a regular course of study, he finished the preparations necessary to enter a public seminary, and was admitted into Union College.

While a member of the Institution, his diligence in study, his respectful deportment and his piety, recommended him to the affection of his teachers, and procured the respect and attachment of his fellow-students. He closed his collegiate course with the highest academic honour.

The confidence which the Faculty of College placed in the acquirements and character of Mr. S. procured him an appointment to the office of Tutor, immediately after he had taken his first degree: And for the space of two years, he discharged the duties of his office with ability, both in government and instruction. As his great design in procuring a public education, was to devote himself to the ministry, he received licence to preach as soon as he could qualify himself for it. After this, he left the business of instruction in College, and gave himself wholly to his Master's service.

Soon after Mr. S. declared himself a candidate for settlement, he received an invitation from Amsterdam, to take the pastoral care of the Church in that place. The great unanimity of the people, their uncommon exertions to procure one who might take the oversight of the Church, and above all, their need of assistance, prevailed upon him to accept their call.

Every thing was promising at the time of his settlement. Both the Church and her Pastor, as well as the friends of religion in general, had much to encourage the highest expectations of usefulness in the connection. But God saw fit that it should be otherwise. Mr. S. experienced, soon after his settlement in the ministry, an inconvenience from a stomachic complaint, and to which he had been subject for some years. He was obliged to suspend his study and ministerial labours for the recovery of his health. His people, strongly attached to him, and anxious that he might afford himself sufficient opportunity to regain his health, and to be confirmed in it, cheerfully consented that he should suspend his labours for a year, and journey for his health. The attempt to retire from labour was made; but his anxiety for his people; his wish to be with them; his desire to improve in the service of his Master, the strength which he possessed, lest he should have no opportunity to labour in his cause, and a hope that he would recover his health equally after he resumed his labour, prevented his absence so long as was necessary for his entire recovery. With a partial restoration of health, he returned to his people. The labour of his office soon preyed upon his slender constitution. He was much enfeebled—his strength declined rapidly until he died.

His bereaved people and friends are called to reflect on these emphatic words of Scripture, *We walk by faith, not by sight.* We know nothing of the purposes of God, further than he is pleased to reveal them to us. Of these purposes very little is revealed. The Lord maketh darkness his pavilion, and spreadeth a thick cloud upon his throne. His paths are in the deep, and his ways past finding out. All we can know of these is derived from his word, declaring that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, mercy and truth go before his face. In the exercise of faith in his word, we are called under the sorest disappointments, as well as the most painful afflictions, to bow with cordial submission to God's will, saying—Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.

IN THIS CITY.

On Friday the 11th inst. Mrs. RACHEL REYNOLDS, relict of the late Stephen Reynolds, of Amenia, Dutchess county. Having led the life of a Christian, she closed her earthly scene in the full and fervent hope of a glorious immortality.

POETICAL DEPARTMENT.

ORIGINAL.

For the CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

LINES

WRITTEN IN THE "GUIDE TO DOMESTIC HAPPINESS,"
LENT BY A FRIEND.

Oh, thou! whose gospel first didst peace impart,
And call'd to bliss my wand'ring, mourning heart,
Whose mercy pardons, and whose heavenly power
Sheds tenderest blessings on each passing hour,
Ah! should I e'er so lost, so wretched be,
To give my heart to one that loves not thee,
Whose lips, nor conduct, own, nor seek my God,
Nor ask an interest in my Saviour's blood,
Whate'er his charms, his virtues, or his love,
My heart might break, its purpose should not move;
My hand! oh never, never should he gain,
His love—nay mine—should plead, should weep in vain.

My heavenly Father, shouldst thou only lend
To me the name of child, of sister, friend;
Subdue my wayward wishes to thy will,
Teach me with joy each duty to fulfil;
But guard from love my heart, my ears, my eyes,
And shield my peace from its seductive sighs;
From pangs of hopeless love my bosom spare,
Nor let its torturing arrows fester there.

My lovely friend! thy guide I now restore;
It claims as duty what was choice before,
And, oh! when love, in lasting hallowed bands,
Shall join congenial hearts and yielding hands,
May the dear youth, so favoured and so blest,
The earthly sovereign of thy feeling breast,
May he, with heart renew'd by grace divine,
Adore, with thee, the God that made him thine.

Oh blest Religion! thou canst bid us prove
New joys in friendship, softer charms in love:
The ties thou formst more lasting joys contain
Than all romance or fancy e'er could feign:
Then souls unite and heavenly hope the same,
Each passion glows a brighter, holier flame.
How sweet the mutual faith! the banish'd fear!
The answering smile! the sympathetic tear!
How sweet with hearts imprest for blessings given,
To breathe united gratitude to Heaven!
How sweet through life to share one fate, one heart,
With the blest hope in heaven no more to part!

n. n.

THE GOOD MAN.

Happy the man, whose cautious steps
Still keep the golden mean;

Whose life, by wisdom's rules well form'd,
Declares a conscience clean.

Not of himself he highly thinks,
Nor acts the boaster's part;
His modest tongue the language speaks
Of his still humbler heart.

What blessings bounteous heaven bestows,
He takes with thankful heart:
With temperance he eats and drinks,
And gives the poor a part.

To sect or party his large soul
Disdains to be confin'd:
The good he loves of every name,
And prays for all mankind.

Pure in his zeal, the offspring fair
Of truth and heavenly love:
The bigot's rage can never dwell
Where rests the peaceful dove.

Not on the world his heart is set,
His treasure is above:
Nothing beneath the sovereign moon
Can claim his highest love.

NEEDHAM.

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